

Chap XX] BHAKTI OR REVERENTIAL LOVE TO
GOD. 437

filling him with hope past all description,
inviting him to
come near the Great Father. Is there not
therefore something
in the riches of Divine Mercy which is
sufficient to melt the
most obdurate and stony heart ? God's
love as delineated
in the parable of the Prodigal Son in the
Christian Scriptures
is not a mere deception and a delusion.
Were it so, then
religion is a lie. God a deceiver, and Divine
Providence the
greatest phantasmagoria which has ever
cheated man. Far
from over-stating, the parable represents
only an infinitesi-
mal fraction of God's inexhaustible mercy.
God leaves the
ninety-nine that are pure in order to find
out the one that is
wicked. In the words of Brahmananda
Keshub Chander Sen,
it would be an insult to the Majesty of
God's Throne, it would
be a blasphemy against Divine Mercy to
say that He will
wrathfully condemn any sinner to eternal
perdition or cast
away for ever and doom to ever-lasting
punishment any man,
simply because he has not accepted a
particular dogma or
believed in a particular religion.

Unto God, with His persevering
goodness and His loving
mercy, the^ is no absolutely lost creature,
however atrociously
evil. There is ever the dear one yet to be

redeemed and
restored to the parental bosom. However
low, fallen and
abject, still the child of God, with all his
iniquity, is dear
and welcome unto God's sanctifying
embrace. God's punishment for sin is not really a punishment in
its ordinary
accepted sense. Strictly speaking, the God
of Love and
Mercy does not punish. He only purifies,
renders clean
what has become sin-stained and redeems
what has been
bartered, away to vice. Punishment, by
whom and of whom?
By the Father and of the child?
Unthinkable. In God's
family there is no punishment but only
purification, unless
we hold that the goldsmith who purifies a
piece of gold is
thereby also punishing that piece. All that
in the harrowing
hour of remorse we name punishment is
really God's purifying
process. We are being tempered in baths
of tears to be made